The Introduction of Hand-Spinning in Schools.

Mr. E. IKKANDA WARIAR

Sir, I beg to move that "this Council recommends to the Government that, in order that hand-spinning be revived as a supplementary industry among the people of the State, the Department of Education may be directed to take necessary steps to introduce hand-spinning as a compulsory handicraft in all the schools of the State."

Sir, let me at the outset thank the Government for having recognised the importance and utility of the spinning wheel and removed the stigma attached to it in some places on account of its association with the political movement in British India.

Sir, the importance of giving vocational and manual training in schools was recognised. A spectacular programme was laid out by the department and left to the good sense of the Head-Masters and Managers of the various schools of the State to carry it out. Such of the Head-Masters and Managers who are anxious to be in the good books of the Director of Public Instruction make an attempt to teach some handicraft or other in a haphazard fashion, especially during the times of inspection. Practically, no funds are set apart for this purpose either by the Department of Education or by the schools concerned, and I am sorry to remark that no tangible results have yet been produced. What is actually done in schools is this. The Department of Education sends periodical circulars calling upon the schools to start handicrafts. The Inspectors remind them of it during inspection. The majority of Head-Masters or Managers have little faith in these things and less money to spend upon them. What shall they do? They must please the Inspectors. If cocoanut fibres can be obtained in plenty, and if the people in that locality know how to make coir, they will introduce coir-making in their schools, and the children of those whose profession is coir-making will make some coir, which will be exhibited when the Inspector goes to that school. If mat-making is a common and popular industry in a particular locality, it will be attempted in the schools of that locality. And so on it goes. My purpose is not to blame anybody for such a state of things. I want to warn the Hon'ble Members not to be carried away by the glowing accounts given in the Administration Report. What I really want is that, instead of dissipating our energies, our funds and our time upon a spectacular programme of handicrafts of doubtful value—I use the adjectives advisedly—we must concentrate all our energies, funds and time at our disposal upon

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one common programme, the most urgent, the most vital, the most useful and the least expensive ; and is there any handicraft other than hand-spinning which satisfies all the above conditions ?

Sir, I had occasion to speak upon this subject in this House during the budget session, and I have shown, among other things, that India can supply one of her most elementary wants—I mean her clothing—if every Indian spins half-an-hour a day, and that it will automatically double the average income of every Indian. Before dealing with the special advantages which hand-spinning possesses over all the other handicrafts proposed to be introduced in the schools of the State, I shall try to remove some of the misunderstandings, born of blind prejudice or indifference, from the minds of many about hand-spinning.

It is often asked, is it economically sound ? In these days of industrial progress, machinery, etc., is it worth while to revive this dead industry ? Can it compete with machinery ? I do admit that machinery has its own place. It has come to stay. But are we in a position, can we afford to allow it, to displace the necessary human labour ? In the words of Mahatma Gandhi, "An improved plough is a good thing. But if by some chance one man could plough up by some mechanical invention of his the whole of the land of India and control all the agricultural produce, and if the millions have no other occupation, they would starve, and being idle, they would become dunces, as many have already become. There is hourly danger of many more being reduced to that unenviable state. I would welcome every improvement in the cottage machine, but I know that it is criminal to displace the hand labour by the introduction of power-driven spindles, unless one is at the same time ready to give millions of farmers some other occupation in their homs."

As regards the economic soundness of *charka*, it is, in the words of Richard Gregg, who has contributed an excellent and exhaustive article to the November issue of the *Modern Review*, really a matter of comparative economies of centralisation *versus* decentralisation. He says:— "Henry Ford, a great industrial pioneer in the most highly industrialised nation, is now decentralising his factories on the ground of economy. He is having products made in the little factories, scattered through the small towns and villages. Mahatmaji working, with a different people and a different product, is merely going several steps better. Khaddar implies not merely a complete decentralisation of

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manufacture, but also decentralisation of production, gathering and storage of raw materials; decentralisation of distribution and sale as well as manufacture. This eliminates tremendous costs and wastes inherent in modern manufacture and distribution. When you stop to consider, it is absurd to think of cotton being gathered in America; assembled and carried by expensive railway transportation to sea-ports; loaded and carried three thousand miles to Europe or perhaps even to Japan; there manufactured in a few cities in plants where the efficiency, wastes of transportation of coal energy into machine horse-power are far in excess of the corresponding transformation losses in hand-power industry, and where plant over-head charges are necessarily very great; then transported several more thousand miles to India, subject at every stage to heavy charges for storage, brokerage or insurance, then passed through a series of middlemen, the whole process further assisting to create the idleness of nearly one hundred million people for three to six months each and every year. By contrast, think of the savings where cotton grown in each province is there spun by each family and woven as needed in each village, but little more than enough for the consumption of the village. Which situation is more economic and sensible?"

There are yet others who ask: Why should all of us spin? Have we no other work or rather better work to do? Can we live by spinning alone, and even if we can, is it desirable to do so? They forget or does not care to understand that nobody wants them to spin the whole of their time to the exclusion of all other work. Only those who have no other work need spin for a living. The half-starved farmer may, with advantage to himself and the country, spin during his leisure hours and supplement his slender resources. When I make an appeal to His Highness the Maharaja, the members of this House including the President and everybody else to spin regularly, I am not a fool to expect nor do I want that all of them would give up their present work. What I really request them is only to spin during their leisure hours by way of symbol and sacrifice, and in order that they might identify themselves with the poor.

I now come to the question of the advisability, feasibility and practicability of introducing hand-spinning as a compulsory handicraft in schools. Hand-spinning, Sir, is the best form of manual training. Its educative value is great. You are aware that compulsory spinning has been introduced in many schools in British India, and the experiment has been found successful

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in most, if not all, such schools. Here is the concluding portion of the report of spinning in the Allahabad Municipal schools in 1924, which will speak for itself:—

"We are convinced, with the little experience we have now gained, that spinning, apart from its economic and national utility, has the best educational value ever thought of by the educationists of the day. It is the finest form of manual training ever devised for big and small children, boys and girls alike. It imparts to them keen power of perception, differentiation of fineness and coarseness. Without any mental strain on the child, it teaches him how to count numbers, as he counts the rounds of the yarn in the hank, to measure length, as he finds out the length of his yarn, to weigh accurately as he himself weighs the yarn of his own spinning, and to calculate with mathematical accuracy, as he finds out the number of counts of his yarn by the application of a simple formula (number count = the length of yarn in yards divided by its weight in tolas, dividing the result by twenty-one).

"The bright child measures and controls the twist of his yarn in order to make it of proper strength. He makes it into leases, and then the leases into a ball. It must be a great joy to the little heart to have made something useful, something of which he can rightly be proud".

"Our experience has shown that the spinning wheel alone can do away with the costly parapharnalia of a kindergarten room, and that it alone is at once educative and productive. Mending a *charka* calls for carpentary skill and is not a mean lesson in manual training; while carding, apart from the work it produces, is a mild exercise to tender arms."

Coming nearer home, you have heard from the Hon'ble Member for Adur that it has been tried in his school and found successful. I know personally of another school where it is working most successfully, though on a limited scale—I mean the noble, unostentatious, enterprising and self-sacrificing Vivekodayam School at Trichur. Two months ago they started spinning in one class and made it compulsory for half-an-hour for every working day. I do not know whether spinning is taught in other schools. I would have spoken with more materials, if some of the questions which I had sent were answered. Now, I have to go on without them. I have got first-hand information from one school at least, and the figures that I am going to place before you presently are based upon that information. There were 35 boys in that class.

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PRESIDENT.

In the Vivekodayam School?

Mr. E. IKKANDA WARIAR.

Yes, Sir. In that school it was compulsorily taught only in one class, i. e., the II Form. Want of funds stood in their way of introducing it in other classes.

Period of working—two months.

No. of days worked—39, at the rate of half-an-hour a day.

No. of boys—35.

Total length of yarn produced—53,449 yards.

Cotton used "ginned and carded"—8¾ lbs.

Weight of yarn produced—6¼ lbs.

Waste of cotton—2½ lbs.

Percentage of waste—30% nearly.

Average speed per hour—94 yards an hour.

Average speed of the best 10 boys—180 yards an hour.

Average count of yarn produced—12.

Highest count produced by the best boy—22.

I may here mention for the information of those who have not got any idea of counts that the ordinary *Torttumundus* that we get are made of yarn of 20 counts and less.

By this calculation, a class of 40 boys, working for a month of 22 working days at the rate of 30 minutes a day, will produce 47×22×40=41,360 yards of 12 counts which weighs 4 lbs. nearly and costs Rs. 5 at the rate of Re. 1-4-0 per lb.

Allowing the same percentage of waste which, however, will steadily decrease, cotton actually used comes to 5 5/7 lbs., which at the rate of annas 10 per lb. cost Rs. 3—9—0, giving a surplus gain of Rs. 1—7—0.

If there are 10 such classes in the school, and all of them work half-an-hour every day, the gain per month comes to Rs. 14—6—0. If cotton can be produced in the schools themselves, there will be a gain of about Rs. 50 per mensem.

I shall next show that there is no practical difficulty in introducing spinning, compulsorily, in schools. One of the very first objections that is generally raised is the question of finance. Where is the money to purchase *charkas* and cotton? Where is the amount to meet the other incidental expenses? There is no difficulty on that score. The only difficulty is that you have not thought over it. You have not thought over the possibilities of the spinning wheel. I shall show to your satisfaction that, instead of the Government having to spend anything, they

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will be able, by the end of 10 months, to realise what they have spent for introducing it, and that, at the end of one year, they will be able to earn at the rate of Rs. 2—3—0 per boy every year.

PRESIDENT.

Rs. 2—3—0 per boy?

Mr. E. IKKANDA WARIAR.

Yes, Sir, and that without any difficulty. The initial expenditure for introducing spinning in a school will be the following:—

40 wheels (best model with stools)	Rs.	125—0—0
Tools, etc., (accessories)	,,	3—0—0
Spindles (80)	,,	2—8—0
Recurring expenses by way of wax, oil, coir, etc.	,,	3—0—0
Total	,,	133—8—0

This amount of Rs. 133—8—0, it is easily seen, can be recouped within ten months at the lowest calculation given above, viz., with a gain of Rs. 14—6—0 per month. It is also obvious that, in course of time, the yarn produced will gain in quality and quantity and the wastage reduced to a minimum, thus steadily increasing the profit.

I shall next deal with the problem of the supply of cotton. If I remember right, this was the only objection raised by the Hon'ble Member for Education, when the subject of spinning in schools was raised by me during the budget session.

A man of average speed can spin yarn of 10 counts in an hour 350 to 400 yards. But he may be called an expert who is able to spin 300 yards.

PRESIDENT.

How many yards can you spin?

Mr. E. IKKANDA WARIAR.

About 400 yards an hour, Sir.

Weight of 300 yards of 10 counts yarn=1 3/7 tolas.

If every student is to spin an hour every school working day, required cotton per day per student=1 3/7 tolas.

Required cotton for a student for 190 working days=271 3/7 tolas, i. e., 6 11/14 lbs.

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Mr. C. MATTHAI.

180 working days and not 190.

Mr. E. IKKANDA WARIAR.

I have made the calculation on the basis of 190 working days in a year. Anyhow, it does not matter much, as the difference is only of 10 days.

The required cotton, therefore, for 1,08,158 students (the total number of students in the State according to the *Administration Report of the Education Department for 1099*) for 190 working days=7,33,928 lbs.

Wastage at the rate of 2 tolas per lb.=36,696 lbs.

Total cotton required for all the schools together=770,625 lbs.

This 770,625 lbs. of cotton can either be purchased from outside or produced in the State itself. The total quantity of cotton produced in India in 1922 is 17,920 lakhs lbs., of which India's requirements for her cloth consumption of 404 crore yards per year is only 7,968 lakhs lbs., i. e., 40 per cent of the cotton actually produced. The balance is exported from India to other parts of the world.

PRESIDENT.

More than that is exported.

Mr. E. IKKANDA WARIAR.

Yes, Sir. Practically the whole of the cotton, except that required for the mills of Ahamedabad, Bombay and such other places, is exported from India, because we do not spin. At any rate, it will not at all be difficult to get the cotton necessary for our schools. It is not also difficult to produce this cotton in our State itself. I request the Hon'ble Member for Agriculture to enlighten this House with his expert opinion on the matter. He has told me that, if we are not producing sufficient cotton necessary for us in Cochin, it is certainly not the fault of the soil or the climate. It is our own fault in not caring for it or not creating demand for it. It can be cultivated anywhere in the State. It grows in my house at Trichur. It grows in the Vivekodayam School and many other places. The trees are quite healthy, and yield at least ½ a lb. of cotton per tree. The Hon'ble Member for Education has told us that the cultivation of cotton is being tried—and successfully too—in other schools also. We need apprehend no difficulty on this score. The only thing wanted is that we must have the will. If we understand the real situation, how we can help the poor, how we can increase our national income by spinning, and if we make others also

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understand them, then everything will be easy. If there is a real and steady demand, then it will automatically be supplied.

If spinning is made compulsory in schools, every boy will be able to increase the income of the school by Rs. 2—3—0 a year.

Standard spinning wages for 1 lb. of 10 counts yarn=As. 5.

Do. for 6 11/14 or rather 7 lbs.—Rs. 2—3—0.

Taking the whole school population as 1,08,158, there will be a net profit of Rs. 2,36,598—10—0 a year. It may be noted that the total amount of receipts from fees, etc., is only Rs. 2,92,445.

Spinning has been tried in some schools, and nobody has raised any serious objection to it. I have shown that the initial expense is not also very great. If there are any schools which cannot find sufficient amount for investment on *charkas*, I recommend to them another instrument called *takli*. It is not a new thing. We find them used by Brahmans for making their sacred threads.

PRESIDENT.

That small thing?

Mr. E. IKKANDA WARIAR.

Yes, Sir. It is not also very difficult to spin with it. I have tried it.

PRESIDENT.

It will take a long time.

Mr. E. IKKANDA WARIAR.

Of course, the speed will be less. But the finest yarn is produced with it. Even the best machines cannot produce such beautiful and fine yarn. I think 300 counts yarn can be spun with this tiny instrument. Its special advantage is that it costs nothing, and every boy can make his own *takli*. For those who have not seen it, I shall describe it.

PRESIDENT.

You could as well have brought a specimen.

Mr. E. IKKANDA WARIAR

Unfortunately, I have not brought one. It is a small ball of raw or burnt clay of half-an-inch diameter, in which is a straight piece of bamboo spindle of the thickness of a tooth-pick and six inches long. The end of the spindle is hooked; for the ball of clay you can use *machinga* (മച്ചിങ്ങ), if you like.

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PRESIDENT.

Our arecanut—could it not be used?

Mr. E. IKKANDA WARIAR.

Yes, Sir. It can be rounded and shaped. It can be used in Primary classes. The boys would like it. It can be used as a toy by them.

The importance of spinning is so great that, even if the Government has to incur some initial expenditure, it does not matter. The Government spends large amounts every year for giving Agricultural training to teachers in the Government Central Farm. I had asked for certain statistics, but I did not get them. About Rs. 3,000 was spent last year for the training of 20 teachers. What are they doing now? They are scattered in different schools, and are doing mostly work other than the teaching of Agriculture. Even if there are some who teach Agriculture, they are not given sufficient facilities for teaching it. They have no implements. They are given two spades and a fork to teach Agriculture in a class of 30 or 40 boys! They have no grounds also for their agricultural operations. What I wish to emphasise is that, if the Government cannot otherwise find money to equip the schools with *charkas* they can, with better advantage, spend this 3,000 or 4,000 rupees, which they now spend on Agriculture, on charkas for one year, and watch the result that will be produced. I assure them that it will be repaid by the end of that year. Again, they are spending a good deal of money on temporary and semi-temporary sheds for the accommodation of students every year. If they are really anxious to do something in this direction, they can easily divert any other funds now allotted for education for one year without having to exceed the total amount allotted for education.

PRESIDENT.

You have exceeded your time limit of 20 minutes. If you have omitted to mention any important things, I shall allow a few minutes more.

Mr. E. IKKANDA WARIAR.

I wanted to meet all possible objections. That is why I am anticipating objections and answering them. I shall reserve the rest for my second turn. With these few remarks, I commend this resolution to the consideration of the House.

Mr. N. PADMANABHA MENON.

Sir, I second this resolution. The resolution has been so ably moved that no more arguments are necessary to support it.

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The principle of introducing handicrafts as optional subjects in schools has been accepted by the department. The question with the House is whether, in introducing handicrafts, compulsion can be resorted to.

PRESIDENT.

The resolution is that hand-spinning should be made a compulsory subject in all schools of the State. Is it a subject in which there should be examination, and is it necessary that the students should pass in each class?

Mr. E. IKKANDA WARIAR.

The students should be compelled to spin. No examination is necessary.

Mr. N. PADMANABHA MENON.

That is a matter of detail which can be left to the department. I think the mover has in his mind that it should be a general subject to be learned by every student.

Mr. C. ACHYUTA MENON.

Promotion need not depend upon the passing of an examination.

Mr. E. IKKANDA WARIAR

They must learn spinning as they learn any other subject.

PRESIDENT.

Of course, the boy might not take an interest but may make a show of spinning. How are we to control his work?

Mr. N. PADMANABHA MENON.

It must be in the curriculum of studies. There is no examination, for instance, in Drill. Yet students have to undergo Drill.

PRESIDENT.

But they are asked to stand this way and that way.

Mr. N. PADMANABHA MENON.

In the same way, there will be a spinning master. That is why a spinning master will have to be appointed. These details will have to be left to the department. It is absolutely necessary that there must be a supplementary industry in all the homes of the poor and the homes of the middle classes. To the rich it will reduce domestic toils. It will also be a source of work just to induce people not to be idle as well as to people who are not able to do out-door work. This is the only industry that requires the smallest amount of outlay and the least

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amount of energy. This industry can be resorted to even by the weak and the invalid. To a certain extent, spinning is the only industry that can be adopted in every home. It is, therefore, necessary that it should be taught in schools. With these reasons, I support the resolution.

Mr. C. MATTHAI.

The Hon'ble Member who has moved the resolution had referred to the same subject in the course of the budget discussion, and then on behalf of Government, I tried to explain what our attitude was in regard to this matter. I assured him that we were doing all that we could under the present conditions to encourage spinning. We recognised the value of spinning, and we were trying to encourage it in schools in all parts of the State. But we have not gone to the length of making it compulsory. I tried to enumerate some of the reasons, some of the obstacles, that stood in the way. That discussion took place only a few weeks ago. The attitude of the Government has not undergone any serious change since then, within that short period. As I have already assured the Hon'ble Members of this House, we know the value of hand-spinning as a valuable subsidiary industry, and it will be our endeavour in the face of every opposition to encourage it and spread it in our schools. But we do not go to the length of Mr. Wariar who is a brilliant enthusiast. We do not question his sincerity, we do not question his intentions. We find that sometimes enthusiasts overstate things. They sometimes do not realise fully the difficulties that are on other side, and I shall briefly try to explain what our position is in regard to this particular matter. I said that I could not agree with Mr. Wariar. It did not answer the purposes of his argument that he should have indulged in sweeping reflections on the department. He himself confessed in the course of the speech that his materials were meagre. That did not, however, make him hesitate to make very sweeping remarks about things which could not have come within his knowledge, and therefore, I must with all due respect raise an emphatic protest against observations of that kind made in the presence of Hon'ble Members of this House. But I admire the enthusiasm of the Hon'ble Member and his good intentions. I am not a wit behind any one else in that respect.

And now to proceed with my subject. As I said, we do not go the length of using compulsion with regard to the introduction of spinning. Mr. Wariar has said we have introduced certain industries in several of our schools. The department does not claim to be perfect in this

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matter. I should be the last to say that. We introduced them only about two years ago. These are only experiments, doing of certain practical things, as a change in the ordinary course of studies followed in schools. We are now groping in the dark, and we are prepared to welcome light from any quarter. The principle on which we proceeded was this : we left the selection entirely to schools. We said we would like to see a certain amount of practical instruction given to pupils in our schools. We would like to see that pupils were trained in manual work. We know that, as a part of real education, manual training has a recognised place. And the training of the hand results in the production of useful beautiful things that very much appeal to the child's mind. You give useful training to his hand and deftness to his fingers, and in that way he is unconsciously undergoing a process very different from the study, say, of History and Geography. This is an essential part of education, to which we do not give the attention that it deserves. Therefore, with this view, we of the department encouraged our schools to start these handicrafts, and the handicrafts pursued are more or less suited to the locality. We have always an eye on expenditure. We are introducing these industries with the utmost possible economy. You will find there is very little being spent by the Government. They work more or less on self-supporting lines. We find this essential for the facility of making arrangements as well as for economising expenditure. We find it necessary to leave to schools the choice of the materials they would like to use. All that we insisted on was that they should give the children a certain amount of practical instruction of this kind. It would be well and good, if all the teachers and pupils did something in this way. For instance, in the regions along the backwater, the material most abundant is cocoanut fibre, and a good many useful products are made out of it. I have myself seen very excellent specimens of products. Of course, there are schools that do it well, and schools that do it indifferently.

Mr. I. E. AMBOOKKAN.

May I know from the Hon'ble Member whether the Government have incurred any expenditure on this?

Mr. C. MATTHAI.

Very little; not worth mentioning. We give some small grants. Of course, you know our funds are very limited. We are passing through a time of financial stress.

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PRESIDENT.

You are in a position to get. Then why should we not spend?

Mr. C. MATTHAI.

What we are able to get remains to be seen. What we have to spend is a certainty.

Mr. I. E. AMBOOKKAN.

First it must be spent.

Mr. C. MATTHAI

Government do not embark on schemes of speculation of that kind. We may spend Rs. 3,000 expecting to realise Rs. 4,000. Such experiments by Government may not prove successful.

PRESIDENT.

In the light of past experience, you must take particular care to do it.

Mr. C. MATTHAI.

In going round the schools, I have seen this, and I told them that we did not want any profit. I told them to buy raw materials with their earnings or to use them in any other way to encourage work of this kind in their schools. In very many schools handicrafts have been introduced, and gardening is also attended to. The Diwan visited a school in Chittur where garden work was carried on. They had formed a small reserve fund by the sale of the produce. So that is the question on which we differ, and where we ought to come to an agreement. Manual instruction of some kind is very necessary—almost essential. I think on this point the department and the mover of this proposition are at one. Where we differ, I mean, where the Government finds its position not quite clear, is whether the time has come to make this a compulsory thing throughout the State. When we introduce a compulsory measure of this kind, we have got to consider all the circumstances. In the first place, there is this question of economy. Where you find that certain materials are abundant, and you find that the people of that locality have acquired a certain amount of skill in the use of those materials, that they make reasonable profits out of that industry, simply because you believe that there is another industry which is likely to be equally profitable, it would not be right on your part to go and displace the one that has already taken firm root there, and introduce another. I do not know if that would be a sound principle of economy.

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Mr. N. PADMANABHA MENON.

May I know whether all the students of the school take part in this handicraft?

Mr. C. MATTHAI.

We do not insist.

PRESIDENT.

As a matter of fact, do they carry on this industry?

Mr. N. PADMANABHA MENON.

It is left to a particular community of men.

Mr. C. MATTHAI.

Surely not. It is left to the option of students and teachers to choose what kind of industry they like best.

Dr. A. R. MENON.

Is it left to the boys?

Mr. C. MATTHAI.

It is not. But the teachers consult the parents of the children. One guardian would say:—"We do not send our children to the school to make coir things"; another, "We do not want them to make baskets and mats. It is not for these things that we send our children to school", and so on. So that the teachers have to exercise a great deal of discretion in these matters and pacify parents. I find, that when we start, there is at first a great deal of indifference and even opposition that we have to overcome. Very many people thought it derogatory on the part of the children to take to work of this kind, but I think we are striding over these difficulties.

To go back to what I was speaking about, as I said, our State is very small. We have got a diversity of conditions; for instance, in one part of our State, in the long backwater region there are certain natural products. When we go to the interior near the hills—Malayattur, Chowwara and other places—we have plenty of bamboo and reeds and such other things. The local industry there is connected with these raw materials, whereas in other places it may be palmyra products, and if we go to Cranganur, it is screw-pine. In Cranganur there is an abundance of screw-pine leaves. The chief work of the poor people there is making mats with these leaves. That is the local industry. In another place it may be grass mats and so on. As a result of the diversity of conditions, there are certain local industries already thriving. They have certainly taken firm root in some

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places. We should try to conform to existing conditions. After all, what we want to promote is the economic prosperity of the State. We do not want to have a particular industry destroyed or displaced and another taking its place. That is not our object.

There is also another consideration When we teach a thing in a school, we don't look at it merely from a utilitarian point of view. Mr. Wariar, in discussing spinning and the spending of money on it, spoke of the profit that might be expected. Well, I do not know if we shall be justified in making workshops and factories of our schools in that way. I think the guardians and parents of pupils may not relish it, and they may have a legitimate ground of grievance.

Mr. E. IKKANDA WARIAR.

May I know whether in any place the experiment has been tried ?

Mr. C. MATTHAI.

As I told you at the outset, we do not compel.

Mr. E. IKKANDA WARIAR.

Did any man think it derogatory ?

Mr. C. MATTHAI.

There have been compiaints, but not about any particular handicraft. But that was only a passing remark. What I want to bring before you is that the teaching that we do in our schools has always an educational value, and even hand-spinning, if we are to estimate it from the amount of manual training it can give, does a certain amount of good in that way. I mean it gives training to the fingers. But then, there are certain other things that are quite as good and valuable, and perhaps even more valuable, for instance, mat-making. I think that gives even a little more of pleasure to children, that it tends to develop their artistic powers in making beautiful things— in the way of mats—mats of different materials, also baskets of different materials and fans and various other products of that kind.

The Hon'ble mover referred to the expensive nature of kindergarten. It will be some comfort for you to know that that is not the case. I went to some small schools, and there I found the teachers could not do any kindergarten work, because they thought it not possible for them to do any such work, if they could not get the coloured paper and the cubes that were supplied from Germany. We had to tell them that the same kind of training could be given much more cheaply with local

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materials. That is how we started these experiments, and what he says about the expensive nature of our kindergarten system is not true.

Mr. M. K. RAMAN.

Sir, can the Hon'ble Member make personal reflections?

PRESIDENT.

If it is a fact, can he not make it ?

Mr. M. K. RAMAN.

I understand personal reflections are not allowed.

PRESIDENT.

Are these personal reflections ? I would not take them in that light.

Mr. E. IKKANDA WARIAR.

I do not take it in that light, because it is self-evident, I was reading something from a book, and the Hon'ble Member attributes it to me. It does not refer to a remark of mine. The Hon'ble Member has not understood me.

Mr. C. MATTHAI.

I am sorry I did not know he was reading from a book. I thought he was speaking ; I feel sorry then.

PRESIDENT.

You were making some observations about kindergarten.

Mr. C. MATTHAI.

I gladly withdraw my remarks. I did not know at all. I am sorry that I made this mistake. I was speaking about the educational value of spinning and the educational value of other handicrafts.

Then there is another aspect of compulsion that we have got to consider. Naturally, compulsion is repugnant to human nature, as when we say : " A thing is very good; you must do it whether you like it or not, whether it suits the locality or whether it does not. ". On compulsion it is quite possible that the thing will be done to satisfy you, but the thing will be done in the proper spirit, if it is left to choice. In fact, it smacks of German Kaiserism. We used to hear of the ruler of the country enforcing whatever he thought was best for his country. He would lay down that such and such things must be done by his people. That sort of benevolent despotism, thinking for other people, and insistence by the Government smacked of German militarism. I think we get much better results

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otherwise. I do not deny that there are certain matters in which we have to use compulsion. But compulsion should be the last thing we should resort to; and so far as existing conditions go, I do not know whether we have reached the stage when we can rightly use compulsion in this matter.

Mr. A. B. SALEM.

May I know whether there are any schools in which you have spinning classes made optional?

Mr. C. MATTHAI.

There are several such schools in the State. In support of his statements, Mr. Wariar quoted Allahabad and other places. I know, in Travancore, about two years ago, they made spinning compulsory in schools. The Legislative Council passed such a resolution. I have been watching the result. What I hear is that complaints are raised in the Legislative Council itself and elsewhere that the rule is not enforced. If we take the example of Travancore, I do not know if the results will be quite encouraging. That is why, as regards compulsion, I oppose the motion.

Mr. A. B. SALEM.

I do not know whether the Hon'ble Member has understood my question. My question was, in how many Government schools of the State spinning classes were opened, and if so, whether the children of the school were given the option?

PRESIDENT.

His reference is to Government schools.

Mr. A. B. SALEM.

My question is whether you have special spinning classes in which the students may or may not join.

Mr. C. MATTHAI.

I do not understand the question at all. There are many aided and Sirkar schools where there are spinning classes, where children spin, and of course, teachers also.

And then, he Hon'ble mover said something, quoting the authority of Mr. Ambookan, the Hon'ble Member for Adur. Well, I am very glad to hear the testimony to the good work that is being done in that school. I have visited the school myself, and spinning is one of the subjects taught there. Mr. Ambookan's School is perhaps one of the best, so far as handicrafts are concerned. In that school, there is a large number of handicrafts taught, and the last time I went there was about three weeks back. I found there Parayas, who were experts in mat-making, teaching that art. There were experts

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from several castes, and the result was that all the teachers learnt, and the students also learnt. At my last visit, I was told that more than Rs. 120 was realised by the sale of the products. But spinning is one of the minor arts taught there. What I found was that he was paying more attention to basket-making, mat-making and other things.

Mr. T. A. RAMACHANDRA AYYAR.

Do they make anything out of clay?

Mr. C. MATTHAI.

Very little useful work is done in that way.

Mr. T. K. KRISHNA MENON.

Very little can be made out of clay.

Mr. C. MATTHAI.

Yes, so that the position we would assume in this matter is that we are entirely sympathetic. We realise its value. We realise it helps to promote the economic well-being of the country. But, under present conditions, we shall not be justified in making it a compulsory subject of instruction everywhere.

I may just refer to another thing. Yesterday, I had to go through a lot of literature on compulsory education, because I thought that that might be a subject coming up for discussion to-day. There was one fact that stood out, and that was this:—we have not yet introduced compulsory education in our State, though there were very many well-wishers who wanted to make it compulsory. They pointed to our neighbouring districts where the thing had been made compulsory, but as a matter of fact, we are working on a voluntary basis. We do not use compulsion. Our aim is to work on voluntary lines. But we find, as regards results, we are much ahead of neighbouring States that have used compulsion. Mysore had gone in for compulsion. Certain British Districts followed suit. Baroda also did so. Travancore has not; and yet, strange to say, the statistics would show that we and Travancore have gone ahead of several of these States that have introduced compulsion. That appeared to me a strange fact. The explanation is this:—our people appreciate the value of education. They are given every possible facility. We give liberal grants, and in every way we are encouraging private agencies coming forward, and the result is that we have a very large percentage of school-going population without resorting to any compulsion.

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Mr. E. IKKANDA WARIAR.

May I know for information whether, as the Hon'ble Member was submitting, the Government had been making libera-grants and whether any amount has been set apart for handicrafts?

Mr. C. MATTHAI.

As I said at the outset, very little; but in many schools they have now small reserve funds. The products are sold, and they keep the money. It gives an added zest to the children, when they can use them for themselves. There are people who are ready to buy these things, and that gain gives an added zest to the children. We do not give any grants, and I think that is perhaps an argument in favour of the thing. We try, as far as possible, to make it work on self-supporting lines. Many schools do not require funds. And besides, we have not got much of spare funds. We make the best of what we have.

I shall briefly sum up the attitude of the Government. We adopt an attitude of sympathy. We appreciate the utility of the thing. We would like to see the thing extended as much as possible in the State, and we would do more, if funds permitted; but until then, we will give all possible facilities. The mover may help us much towards the spread of the industry in our State, and so too there may be other agents willing to co-operate. We would welcome their help, and we would see how the thing progresses, and later on we shall decide as to the best course to be adopted.

Mr. A. B. SALEM.

Sir, I rise to move an amendment to the resolution.

PRESIDENT.

Have you given notice of the amendment?

Mr. A. B. SALEM.

Under Rule 42 the President can dispense with it. Notice is required only in case an objection is raised. When I moved, no member rose to object to the amendment on any ground. It is for me to ask the indulgence of the House.

PRESIDENT.

Nobody has objected.

Mr. K. T. MATHEW.

We have not heard the amendment. How can we object before hearing the amendment?

PRESIDENT.

Let us see whether your amendment is going to be rejected.

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Mr. A. B. SALEM.

My amendment is to make it easy for the Government to accept this resolution as a compulsory handicraft in all the schools.

My amendment is:—

Between the words "handicraft" and "made a compulsory" add "optional" and delete "compulsory."

Then the resolution will read thus:—

"That this Council recommends to the Government that, in order that hand-spinning be revived as a supplementary industry among the people of the State, the Department of Education may be directed to take necessary steps to introduce hand-spinsing as an optional handicraft in all the schools of the State."

Dr. A. G. MENON

It is not an amendment. The chief point is compulsion, and the word "optional" changes the whole meaning of the resolution. It is negatived. I have my own doubt whether it is not negativing the proposition. It is not an amendment.

Mr. A. B. SALEM.

I understand that the Hon'ble mover's object is to introduce spinning as a handicraft in all the schools of the State as a compulsory subject. If it is made optional, students may join. Five members of each class may like to join the spinning class. In some class none may like to join. But if you make it compulsory, it would mean that every student will have to go through the spinning class, and if you do not make it optional in any particular school, there may be parents who object to the spinning craft and ask them not to go to that school. Any student in any class may go there for half an hour a day. My object was to frustrate this and to make it optional till we reach such advancement in time as would permit compulsion. Since that is not possible, I would like to have it introduced as an optional subject. When that advancement comes, we shall make it compulsory. Till then, we have to run the class in every institution on an optional basis. I do not think I was understood properly, when I was objected to.

Dr. A. G. MENON.

From the speech of the Hon'ble mover, it was clear that he had laid stress more on compulsion. A mere word takes away the spirit and the whole sense of the resolution, and it is no amendment. And, of course, in the present state of things, there is no option, as the Director of Public Instruction has stated

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Mr. A. B. SALEM.

It has not the effect of negativing. For that we must consider how this "optional" will stand with reference to "compulsory". If the amendment is not acceptable, I must oppose the resolution, and I will be in a very regretable position of opposing a resolution dear to my heart, which I like to make my own.

PRESIDENT.

What is your position?

Mr. A. B. SALEM.

Well, my amendment was not seconded and I do not wish to press it.

PRESIDENT.

Mr. Ambookkan, have you got anything to say on the resolution under discussion?

Mr. I. E. AMBOOKKAN.

At any rate, I think it well to speak a few words, since the Hon'ble Member for Education has made mention of my school with regard to the subject. I am not for introducing spinning as a compulsory subject in all the schools of the State, though nobody will deny that spinning is a subject which cannot be introduced in all the schools. The difficulty I find is with regard to the question of finance. If it is to be compulsorily introduced in all the schools of the State, surely the Government will have to find out the whole amount which will have to be invested upon *charkas*. If not, it will be a rather difficult thing for a time. We are at present unable to buy even *charkas*. Each will cost Rs. 3. So all the *charkas* in all the schools of the State will have to be supplied by the Government. This I say out of my own experience. As a matter of fact, I have introduced three or four *charkas* in my school. Still, I find it very difficult to make it a profitable concern. I do not get good cotton, even though I cultivate it in my own school. It is affected by some worm disease.

PRESIDENT.

Did you not consult the Superintendent of Agriculture?

Mr. I. E. AMBOOKKAN.

Though it will be successful cultivation, I find it also difficult. It is difficult to get good cotton in our State. It will have to be got from Coimbatore.

Dr. A. G. MENON.

In our State the Chittur Taluk produces good cotton.

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Mr I. E. AMBOOKKAN.

That is a different place

Dr. A. G. MENON.

That is also our State. So I came forward when I heard the Hon'ble Member saying that there is no good cotton in our State.

Mr. I. E. AMBOOKKAN.

Anyhow this is a matter of finance. If the Government is pleased to invest a good lot of money, it is well and good. We have no objection.

Dr. A. R. MENON.

We have listened with great interest to the speech delivered by the Hon'ble Member for Urakam—a speech full of facts and figures. It was a surprise to me that he was able to show that he could work the *charka* not only without a loss, but with a moderate gain. I myself am not a *Khaddar* wearer, but facts are facts, and figures are figures. I have no reason to think that those statements that Mr. Wariar has made are not based upon sufficient data; and when he says that a scholar can make an average net profit of Rs. 2 a year, the question really becomes worthy of consideration. I came here with the intention of opposing the motion, but after listening to his speech, I was compelled to change my view, and I rise to-day to support the motion whole-heartedly.

Now, there are no two opinions as to the utility of the *charkas* or of *Khaddar*. But the question arises, have you or have you not a right to compel scholars to work the *charka*? Well, when I was a student, I have been compelled to study subjects, for instance, like Mathematics, which, I hated with all my heart. Yet the University did not show me any consideration. If it is conceded that I should be compelled to study an abstruse subject, which, after all, is not of much practical use, can you for a moment entertain any doubt as to your right to enforce compulsion upon scholars to pick up a rudimentary knowledge of spinning?

Certainly, I cannot speak with the same authority as the member who moved this resolution. He can convince us because he follows what he preaches.

It is said that, from an economic point of view, the *charka* is a failure. If it is so, it is not likely that a man like Mahatma Gandhi would commend it to men and women, old and young alike Convinced of its economic value, it was only last week

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that the Trichur Municipal Council acceded to the request of a Committee of three ladies for a plot of ground under its control to be utilised for popularising the *charka* movement.

There is a feeling abroad that something must be done to do away with the miserable, grinding poverty of the masses; and it has been clearly proved that the only thing that can effect thin is cottage industry.

The Council adjourned for the day at 5 p. m.

T. K. KRISHNA MENON,

Secretary to the Council.

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